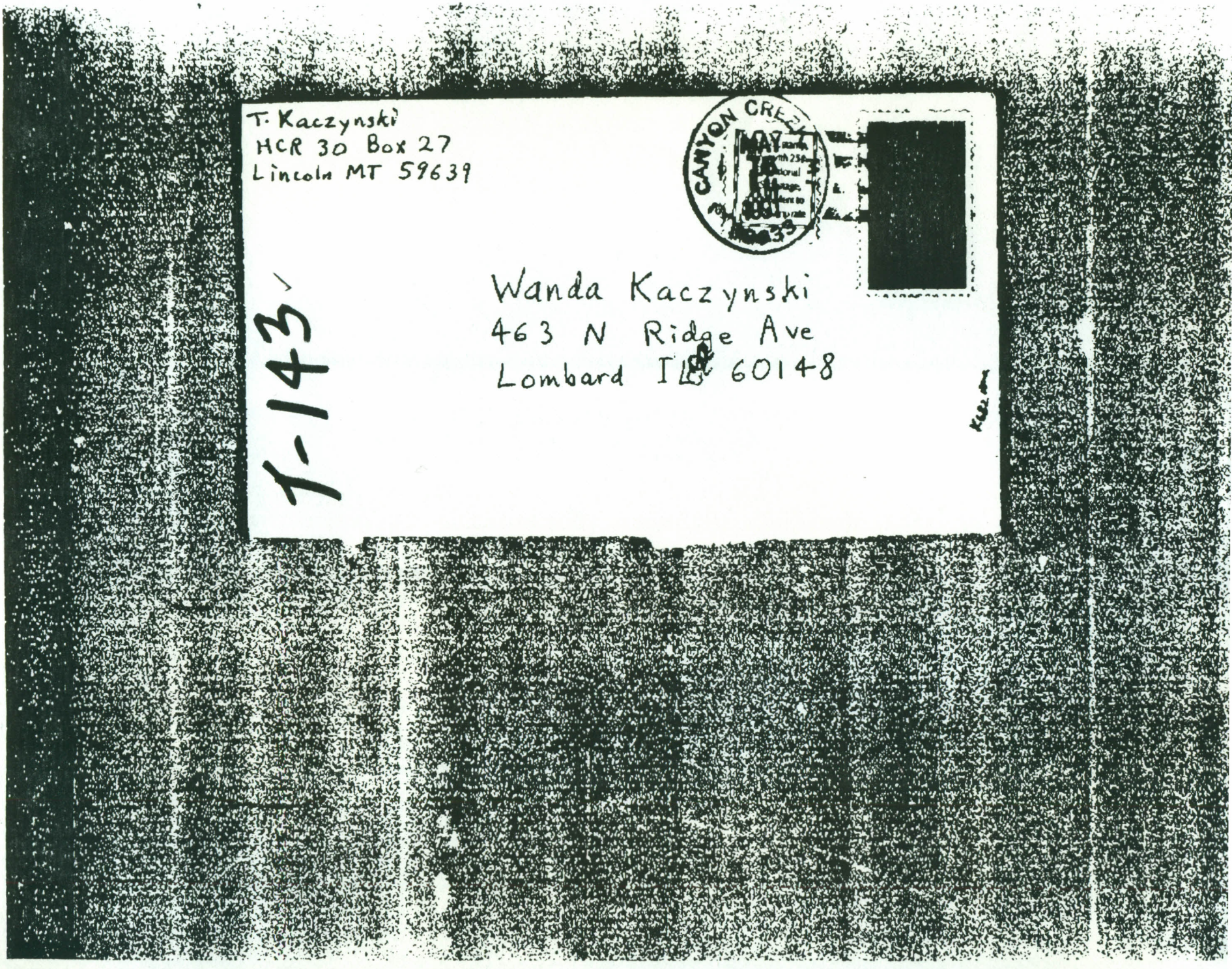
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May 15, 1971

Kubie

Dear Ma -

I've received the laboratory report on the skin growth, and it says there is no sign of malignancy. So that's OK. As for the heart examination, I still haven't received any word on the blood tests, so I can't give you a report on that. But I hope I'll get the results before I mail this letter, and if so, I'll report them to you later on in this letter.

Meanwhile, I'll tell you about that psychological research project in connection with which you received a phone call recently. When I was a sophomore at Harvard I received a postcard inviting me to participate in a "psychological experiment". If I remember correctly, I later learned that these cards were mailed out at random to Harvard sophomores, and a certain modest payment ($5 or something like that) was offered for taking a questionaire-type personality test. Since I had no objection to getting $5 for an hour of my time I bit at the bait and took the test. I later learned that the purpose of the test was to enable the psychologists to select the types of personalities they wanted for their studies.

A little while after taking the test I received a message asking me to come and see a Professor H. A. Murray. The message was a request, not a demand, but when a college student is "requested" to call on a professor of his institution he generally interprets it as more or less obligatory, so I went and saw Prof. Murray. He told me that I had been selected to participate in their

study, and, in short, he talked me into participating. It would probably be more accurate to say that he manipulated me into participating. He did some fairly obvious psychological button-pushing: He told me that there would be some Radcliffe girls participating in the study (good bait for securing the compliance of horny young males); he mumbled something about a party for participants in the study (good chance to meet those Radcliffe girls); he said that at some point the psychologists would tell us about some of the conclusions they had reached in the study (which of course would have been interesting); and when I expressed concern that the project might take up too much of my time during my senior year, he said that during the senior year there would be a reduction in the amount of time demanded by the project. Actually the old son of a bitch was lying. I later learned that there were no Radcliffe girls in the study — it was a study exclusively of (male) Harvard students. If there was ever a party given for participants in the study then I certainly wasn't invited and never heard anything about it. And to me, at least, the psychologists never said a single word about any conclusions that they had reached. As for the time taken in the senior year, if there was any reduction in that, it wasn't enough so that I could notice any difference.

Anyhow, I regret to say that he talked me into saying "yes", and having

to directly defy persons in a position of authority, such as professors. So I cooperated with them through my senior year, as I had reluctantly agreed to do. At that time nothing had ever been said of follow-up studies later in life, so, at the conclusion of my senior year, any obligation that I might ever have had to those people was completely fulfilled, and since leaving Harvard I have never given them any help and I never intend to do so.

In case you are curious, my participation in the study consisted mainly of filling out questionaire-type personality tests and going through interviews with the psychologists. In at least some of these interviews the psychologists seemed to be trying to get chummy with me, presumably in an attempt to get me to loosen up and reveal more of myself. Because I resented having been talked or manipulated into participating, I refused to loosen up & get chummy with them. I answered their questions, but I volunteered very little information. By the way, I suspect that at least part of ~~the purpose~~ of the study was to develop questionaire-type personality tests.

There was a good deal of snobbery at Harvard. Of course there were people there from all walks of life, but apparently the system there was run by people who came from the "right" cultural background. This certainly seemed to be the case at Eliot House, anyway. The house master, John Finley, apparently was surrounded by an in-crowd or clique, and the people who got

to participate in the Christmas play, for example, always seemed to be of the type who would fit in with this clique. The house master often treated me with insulting condescension. He seemed to have a particular dislike for me. I used to think that this was merely because I made no attempt to wear the "right" clothes or to ape Harvard manners but now I wonder whether plain old-fashioned class snobbery, in the strict sense of the word, might not have had something to do with it. Not long ago I read "FDR: a Remembrance", by Joseph Alsop. Alsop had connections with the Harvard set, and he stated in that book that in 1955 John F. Kennedy was not permitted to become a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers because he was an Irish Catholic. Since I entered Harvard 3 years later, in 1958, it seems probable that a good deal of class snobbery must still have existed at Harvard at that time.

One of the psychologists who was participating in that study, and who interviewed me a few times, was a youngish instructor who lived at Eliot House. He was a member of the house master's inner clique. Two or three times when I met him at Eliot House I said "hello". In each case this psychologist answered my greeting in a low tone, looking off in another direction and hurrying away as if he didn't want to stop and talk to me. I've thought this over, and the only half-way plausible

is that this man didn't want to be seen socializing with someone who wasn't dressed properly and wasn't acceptable to the clique of which he was a member.

So, as I've said, I'm not going to give those jerks any help. And if they ever phone you again, I would very much prefer that you hang up as soon as you find out who is calling. In no case should you ever give them any information about me.

I've received your $25.00 check. Thank you very much. I trust that by this time you have received my letter about the doctor visit.

As of today, May 15, two weeks and two days after my visit to the cardiologist, I have not yet received the results of the blood tests. When a week had passed after the tests were taken and I had received no word, I called the Doctor's office to remind the office staff that I'd arranged to have the results mailed to me. The woman I talked to said she thought she'd seen the results on the nurse's desk, and that she would see if she could send them out." I waited another 6 days, and then (day before yesterday) I called the doctor's office again and talked to a woman who said she would "talk to the nurse and see if we can get the results in the morning mail." If the results had been put in yesterday's morning mail I would have expected to get them in today's. [illegible] haven't come. I'll wait a

four more days, and if I don't receive anything
in that I'll call the doctor's office again and
insist on talking to the doctor personally.
The doctor gave the impression of being
a very efficient person, but appearances can
be deceiving. If she were efficient, you
would think that she would be on it that
her office staff — or on the ball. Or, if
there was some definite reason why the
results cannot be sent promptly,
I still think that she would notify me
of that fact, so that I would know what
to expect.
Anyhow, I'm [redacted] letter
off to you now, [redacted] and
the rest of the results of the [redacted] I'll let
you know that information in another letter.

Ted